

As also happens up here, there is often disagreement between the governor (and his financial team) and the legislature as to the precise fiscal condition of the territory and the true revenue projections for the coming fiscal year. A CFO, in my view, would take the uncertainty out of this equation and allow our legislature and governor to work better together because they would both get their numbers from the same independent source. Additionally, the departments of government, semi-autonomous agencies and labor unions would be better able to plan, and the people of the Virgin Islands in general would have information on how the millions of Federal dollars coming to the Virgin Islands are being spent.

The bill as being passed today contains certain changes. I have revised it with respect to providing a financial management system because such a system is already in the process of being implemented. In recognition of and in deference to the upcoming constitution to be drafted by the people of the Virgin Islands, the bill before us calls for the term of the Chief Financial Officer to expire at the implementation of a ratified Virgin Islands Constitution or in five years, whichever comes first.

All four previous Constitutional documents have contained a provision similar to what is proposed in this legislation, and it is my hope that our Fifth Constitutional Convention will present a document for the ratification of the people of the Virgin Islands that will make this legislation unnecessary. In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague, the Chairman of the Resources Committee, the gentleman from West Virginia, NICK RAHALL, without whose support this bill would not be on the floor today. I also want to thank my friend Ranking Member DON YOUNG for his support as well.

Madam Speaker, it has been said that "heavy is the burden that one who is called to lead bears". Pursuing enactment of this bill has not been an easy burden to bear but an important one; which I am proud to bear. I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 2107.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 9/11 COMMISSION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2007

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 1, Improving America's Security Act of 2007, which includes critical security provisions endorsed by the 9/11 Commission as well as an overdue expansion of the visa waiver program, VWP.

Mr. Speaker, the visa waiver program is an immensely valuable program for the United States, and the legislation before us will not only enable us to expand the visa waiver program to additional allies who already offer U.S. citizens visa-free travel to their countries, but simultaneously strengthen the security aspects of the program.

Although H.R. 1 expands the VWP, I would have preferred that the program expand to all the roadmap countries, among them some of

America's most important and loyal allies, and I am hopeful Congress will take steps to address this issue in the near future.

Despite my concerns that some roadmap countries may be excluded, this legislation is an important step towards addressing the security concerns that members of Congress have articulated about the visa waiver program. I am confident that once the security measures outlined in H.R. 1 are implemented, those members of Congress who previously had concerns about the program will be open to considering further expansion of the visa waiver program.

In the meantime, it is imperative that the Bush Administration and Congress continue to work with our allies, who deserve to participate in the program. The United States should also provide assistance to help these governments reduce their visa refusal rates and meet all the necessary requirements detailed in the Improving America's Security Act.

It is clear that H.R. 1 fulfills key 9/11 Commission recommendations and improves the security aspects of the visa waiver program, and I applaud my colleagues for their efforts to make our country safer and further expand this program. However, America cannot successfully fight the battle against international terrorism without the cooperation and trust of our allies. I would like to remind my colleagues that the 9/11 Commission also stressed the need for diplomacy and cooperation with other Nations to address the threat of international terrorism. In this vein, further expansion of the visa waiver program can play a vital role in strengthening America's relationships and security partnerships with our most trusted allies—which is essential to preventing another 9/11 disaster.

FARM, NUTRITION, AND BIOENERGY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2419) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Chairman, I would like to express my support for the amendment to the Farm Bill Extension Act of 2007, H.R. 2419, offered by my friend Mr. FRANK from Massachusetts. The amendment aims to remove the expansions in the underlying legislation that would expand the Farm Credit System. The Farm Credit System is a \$163 billion direct lending Government sponsored enterprise that has its own regulatory system and preferential borrowing authority.

The proposed expansions of the Farm Credit System in the original measure would have diluted farmer ownership of farm cooperatives and would have undermined farm cooperative principles. Fortunately, the Frank amendment passed last night by a voice vote, as these extensions of the Farm Credit System clearly did not have the support of the majority of my House colleagues. Because the amendment was approved, the Farm Credit System is bet-

ter able to serve its intended constituency by providing credit directly to family farmers, ranchers, and farmer-owned cooperatives.

The protections afforded by the Frank amendment to the farming sector are also reflected in protecting our financial institutions by preventing an unwarranted expansion into mainstream banking activities. Our Nation's financial institutions have continued to evolve and meet the needs of consumers over the years. These innovations should continue to be fostered while maintaining the security and independence of our financial institutions.

I applaud the passage of the Farm Bill, which will provide our Nation's farmers with meaningful and necessary assistance for the next 5 years. I look forward to continuing to work with my House colleagues to enact effective reform in the financial sector as well.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE MCINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote No. 748. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 748.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, as reflected in the RECORD, on July 25 and 26, I was on a scheduled leave of absence for a family funeral. If I had been present, I would have voted in the following way:

On rollcall No. 727, I would have voted "aye"; on rollcall No. 728, I would have voted "aye"; on rollcall No. 729, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 730, I would have voted "aye"; on rollcall No. 731, I would have voted "aye"; on rollcall No. 732, I would have voted "aye"; on rollcall No. 733, I would have voted "aye"; on rollcall No. 734, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 735, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall No. 736, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 737, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 738, I would have voted "aye"; on rollcall No. 739, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 740, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 741, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 742, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 743, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall No. 744, I would have voted "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to submit a record of how I would have voted on Thursday, July 26, during which I